

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 22360 221402Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O R 221136Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3182

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 22360

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, CGEN,CVIS,TH

SUBJECT: INDOCHINA REFUGEES IN THAILAND

1. SUMMARY.

A. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS PAROLE AUTHORIZATION FOR 640 CAMBODIAN AND VIETNAMESE WHO QUALIFY UNDER PRESENT GUIDELINES. CURRENT QUOTAS ARE EXHAUSTED AND THEY CANNOT BE PROCESSED FOR TRAVEL TO THE U.S. PRIOR TO OCTOBER 31.

B. EMBASSY ALSO RECOMMENDS PAROLE AUTHORIZATION FOR 333 VIETNAMESE WHO DO NOT NOW QUALIFY BECAUSE THEY ARRIVED AFTER JULY 1 CUT-OFF. ACCEPTANCES OF THESE PERSONS WOULD EMPTY THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE CAMP AT VAYAMA AND WOULD BE REGARDED BY RTG AS FULFILLMENT OF INFORMAL AGREEMENT REACHED DURING PEAK OF REFUGEE CRISIS LAST SPRING THAT WE WOULD DO OUR BEST TO RESETTLE THE VIETNAMESE AND THE THAI WOULD HANDLE THE BULK OF THE CAMBODIANS.

C. THIS CABLE ALSO PROVIDES SOME GENERAL BACKGROUND ON CAMBODIAN REFUGEE POPULATION REMAINING IN THAILAND AFTER OCTOBER 31. END SUMMARY.

2. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW: BY OCTOBER 31 THE INS PAROLE QPOTAS FOR CAMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE IN THAILAND WILL BE FULLY UTILIZED AND ALL OF THESE REFUGEES WILL HAVE ARRIVED IN THE U.S. ABOARD ICEM CHARTER FLIGHTS. UNDER THE EXPANDED PAROLE GUIDELINES (STATE 236685), 350 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES REMAINING AT VAYAMA CAMP STILL QUALIFY
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PAGE 02 BANGKO 22360 221402Z

UNDER CATEGORY I AND 290 CAMBODIANS REFUGEES STILL QUALIFY

UNDER THE THREE CATEGORIES (CAT I - 100; CAT II - 30; AND CAT III - 160). USING CURRENT GUIDELINES, EMBASSY WOULD NEED 640 ADDITIONAL PAROLE NUMBERS TO PROCESS THESE CASES.

3. DISCUSSION OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEE SITUATION IN THAILAND: PRESENTLY, THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE CAMP AT VAYAMA ACCOMMODATES 1,200 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES MOSTLY FROM LAOS (50 ARE EX-ARVN). OF THIS NUMBER APPROXIMATELY 517 WILL BE PAROLED AND TRAVEL TO THE U.S. BY OCTOBER 31. OF THE REMAINING 683 VIETNAMESE LEFT AT VAYAMA CAMP AFTER OCTOBER 31 ABOUT 350 ARE ESTIMATED TO MEET CATEGORY I, BLOOD RELATIVE CRITERIA. (EXACT NUMBER QUALIFIED WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT INS SCREENING.) IF PAROLE NUMBERS FOR THESE CATEGORY I CASES WERE AUTHORIZED, ONLY 333 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WOULD THEN REMAIN AT VAYAMA CAMP. EVEN THIS GROUP WOULD QUALIFY UNDER CATEGORY I, EXCEPT THAT THEY DID NOT MEET THE JULY 1 CUT-OFF DATE. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS GROUP WAIVER FOR THIS LAST GROUP ON SEVERAL GROUNDS: (A) THE BULK OF THESE VIETNAMESE CAME FROM LAOS AND THE JULY CUT-OFF DATE IS NOT RELEVANT TO LAOS AS THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT OVERTHROWN ABRUPTLY AS IN CAMBODIA AND SOUTH VIETNAM; (B) WHILE WE HAVE NO COMMITMENT WE TOLD THE RTG IN APRIL, IN ORDER TO GET ITS COOPERATION IN OTHER AREAS, THAT WE WOULD DO OUR BEST TO SEE THAT ALL VIETNAMESE REFUGEES LEFT IN THAILAND; AND (C) THIS SMALL GROUP IS INCREASINGLY THE FOCUS OF CONGRESSIONAL AND PRIVATE ENQUIRIES. A FINAL ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF ACCEPTING THE 683 REFUGEES REMAINING AT VAYAMA CAMP AFTER OCTOBER 30 IS THEIR JOB QUALIFICATIONS: 85 PERCENT FALL IN THE IRAFTSMEN CATEGORY; 10 PERCENT IN THE ILERIIAL AND STUDENT CATEGORY; AND 5 PERCENT MISCELLANEOUS. MOST SPEAK EITHER ENGLISH OR FRENCH.

4. DISCUSSION OF CAMBODIAN REFUGEE SITUATION IN THAILAND: BASED ON CABLES FROM U.S. RESETTLEMENT CAMPS AND INTERVIEWS WITH REFUGEES, EMBASSY ESTIMATES THAT AT LEAST 100 CAMBODIANS MEET CATEGORY I CRITERIA AND 30 MIGHT MEET CATEGORY II IRTERIA (USG EMPLOYEE). (NOTE: EMBASSY ALSO BELIEVES THAT CATEGORY I REFUGEE FAMILIES OF U.S. RELATIVES WHO ARE IN NON-IMMIGRANT OR INDEFINITE VOLUNTARY DEPARTURE STATUS CONSTITUTE A SPECIAL GROUP DESERVING CONSIDERATION FOR

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 22360 221402Z

PAROLE ELIGIBILITY. ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CAMBODIANS IN THIS GROUP IS 85.) THOSE CAMBODIANS REGARDED AS ELIGIBLE UNDER CATEGORY III INCLUDE ABOUT 100 WITH OTHER MORE DISTANT RELATIVES IN U.S., AND 60 WITH A CLOSE ATTACHMENT TO THE US GOVERNMENT (I.E., TRAINED BY U.S. MILITARY FOR THE MOST PART). THE NUMBER OF CASES OF HUMANITARIAN MERIT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTIMATE WITH ANY AICURACY.

5. OF THE 6,300 OTHER CAMBODIAN REFUGEES ON WHOM THE EMBASSY HAS AN OFFICE FILE AND BASIC BIOGRAPHIC DATA, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 200 ARE TEACHERS, 200 MILITARY OFFICERS, 2,272 ENLISTED MEN, 60 POLICE OFFICERS, 400 MIDDLE AND LOWER LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, 100 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, 500 OTHER STUDENTS, 90 BUSINESSMEN, AND 1,500 SMALLER MERCHANTS, SKILLED BLUE COLLAR WORKERS OR SERVICE WORKERS. MANY IN THIS GROUP WOULD MEET EXPANDED CATEGORY III CRITERIA, BUT EVEN IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT NUMBERS WERE MADE AVAILABLE, SCREENING CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED BEFORE OCTOBER 31.

6. FINALLY, THERE ARE ABOUT 4,000 CAMBODIANS WHO HAVE ENTERED THAILAND AFTER JULY 1. SOME OF THESE DOUBTLESS MEET CATEGORY I CRITERIA AND OTHERS MEET CATEGORY II AND IIIIN BUT NO SURVEY HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT TO DEFINE THE POST-JULY 1 CATEGORIES.

7. DISCUSSION OF LAOTIAN REFUGEE SITUATION IN THAILAND: THE PAROLE AUTHORIZATION FOR LAOTIAN REFUGEES IN THAILAND IS SUFFICIENT TO PROCESS CURRENT CASE LOAD. ONLY PROBLEM HERE IS THAT MOST OF THE LAOTIANS APPROVED FOR PAROLE BY INS ARE WITHOUT A U.S. SPONSOR (WHICH IS REQUIRED UNDER PRESENT PROCESSING GUIDELINES).

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PAROLE, REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO22360
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750366-0978
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751030/aaaabaqj.tel
Line Count: 139
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <10 Jun 2003 by MorefiRH, INA>; RELEASED <08 JUL 2003 by MorefiRH>; RELEASED <08 Jul 2003 by MorefiRH>; APPROVED <05 JAN 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDOCHINA REFUGEES IN THAILAND
TAGS: SREF, CGEN, CVIS, TH, CB, VS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006